



Footwear in the Workplace

July 28, 2011



Unlike a bad hair day, a bad shoe day can be devastating! So, which shoes are appropriate for your work environment? Use these guidelines to determine the proper footwear. But first, check with your employer about work-specific requirements, since personnel protection equipment, including footwear, is dependent on the type of work, environment and location.

Long Periods of Standing

There are many occupations that require you to stand all or most of the day. While you probably won't be able to change work requirements, ensuring you wear the proper shoes can help alleviate foot and back pain and make work more enjoyable. Contrary to popular belief, completely flat shoes are not recommended when standing on your feet all day. According to the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc., the heel should be elevated by at least 1/4 inch to allow the sole to have good arch support. In contrast, shoes with a heel of 2 inches or higher are not recommended. It is important that you choose a shoe that has a wide toe box with good arch support. Also, your feet tend to swell during the day, so try to shop for shoes in the late afternoon when your feet are largest. Wearing a shoe with a lace or Velcro strap helps stop the foot from sliding forward when walking. Shoelaces act in much the same way seatbelts do -- stop unwanted movement and protect against injury. When shopping for shoes, consider buying at a retailer that specializes in work shoes.

Office / Institutional

Comfortable shoes are a top priority for office workers. Lower heeled shoes are recommended if you walk a lot or go up and down stairs.

There are work shoes for almost all job types. Whether you constantly are working with heavy objects or simply standing in one place, your feet are vitally important for the condition of your back and legs. Wearing the appropriate work shoe is one way to help avoid tripping and falling, and maintaining a well-conditioned, healthy body.

Construction / Warehousing / Heavy Lifting / Mechanic

It is recommended that you wear sturdy steel or composite toe safety shoes to protect your feet when working in a warehouse or outside, with heavy objects or cutting blades, or on uneven or rough terrain. Waterproof and/or slip resistant safety shoes are a good additional feature if you work outside or on work surfaces that may become slick. Your feet can be the cause of a lot of problems in the workplace if you do not wear appropriate safety shoes. The shoe should be capable of providing support for the arches as well as the ankles without completely restricting ankle movement. Metatarsal guards and/or puncture resistant soles also may be needed.

Electricians

There are a number of work boots/shoes designed with electrical hazard resistance specifically for electricians. Be sure that the footwear you choose is designed to protect against electrical hazards. The safety toe feature also is recommended.

Safety Tip of the Week

**THINK ABOUT
SAFETY
BEFORE YOU
ACT**



If you have questions, comments, or a topic you would like to see addressed:

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